

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA - 1434

MAG-0314343601

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Grason House

AND/OR COMMON

205 West Chesapeake Avenue

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

205 West Chesapeake Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

9th district

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Raymond A. Seitz

Telephone #: 823-4989

STREET & NUMBER

502 Highland Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland, 21204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New Courts Building, Recording Division-Land Records

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #: 1755

Folio #: 22

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

NONE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

—EXCELLENT
 X GOOD
 —FAIR

—DETERIORATED
 —RUINS
 —UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED
 X ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE
 —MOVED DATE Jan., 1978

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house is a 2½ story frame building, currently covered with wood shingles. The roof is gabled. The basic layout is rectangular with a central chimney.

On the north or "main" facade, the house is three bays wide. On the eastern corner there is a 1½ story projection which accommodates an interior staircase. A large, centralized pediment dominates the roof. There are two 1 story porches, being a three bay porch on the main block and a small shed roof porch on the projection. Both porches have brick floors and rest on brick foundations.

The porches are supported by thin, square, wooden columns, resting on wooden pedestals. All edges are chamfered. The columns are set in pairs, linked by latticework in a double-X pattern. The porches are enclosed by a wooden railing with vertical posts.

There are two doors, one on each porch. The door of the larger porch is situated in the eastern corner and is ornamented by four-pane sidelights. Fenestration is regular with 1/1 double-hung sash windows. All of the windows have plain trim and a pair of louvered shutters. There is also a small 18 pane casement window venting the gable.

The base of the roof pediment is concave and made up of long, narrow wooden strips. The lower corners of the pediment are decorated by a tree-dimensional sunburst pattern, also made of wooden strips.

On the west facade the first story is four wide bays deep, and the second story is two wide bays deep. The first story is made up of the two bays of the main block and two bays of an wing (possibly a newer addition). The northern bays of the main block rest on an uncoursed stone foundation. A brick foundation supports the remainder. The house is built into a hill, so the height of the foundation rises until the brick at the southern end is almost a full story.

The wing projects slightly to the west, allowing for a north facing door. This door is protected by a bracketed hood, and, because of the height of the foundation, is reached by a series of brick steps. There is another door, facing east in the brick foundation, which leads into the basement.

Fenestration is irregular as a variety of window types are used. Running north to south, going by stories, there is: Basement - 1-pane casement, 3-pane double casement, (door), 4/4 sash; First Story - 1/1 sash, 4/4 sash, 4-pane double casement, 1/1 sash; Second Story - two 1/1 sashes; Attic - 18-pane casement, 2/2 sash (This attic window in the wing is possible because of an irregularity in the wing's roof allowing for second story windows on the second story on the south facade. This leaves space for attic windows in the wing.).

The south facade is two bays wide. A centralized door in the brick foundation leads into the basement. Fenestration is again irregular. Running west to east, going by stories, there is: Basement - two 4-pane casements; First Story - two 1/1 sashes; Second Story - two 1/1 sashes; Attic - (of wing) two small 1/1 sashes.

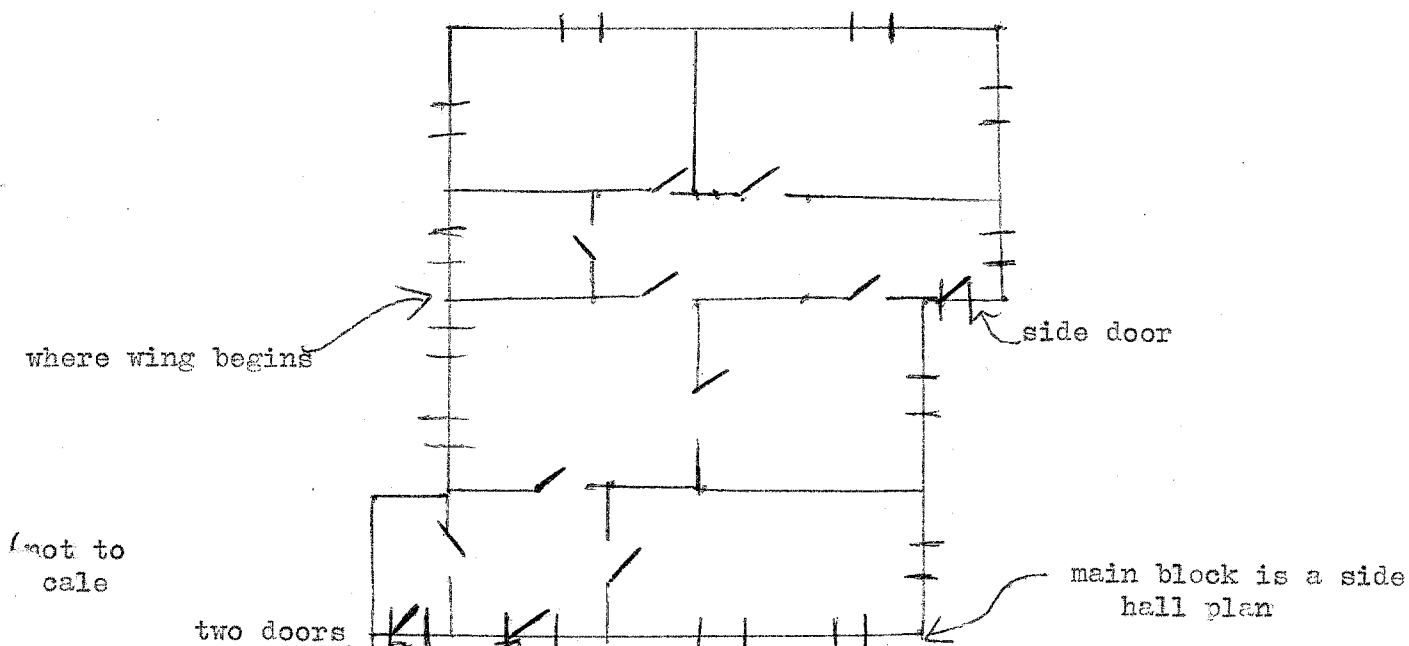
The east facade is similar to the west facade - stone to brick foundations, four bays on the first floor, two bays on the second floor. On the northern end is the projection which houses the interior staircase. It is one bay wide and 1½ stories tall. The roof of this projection is pitched to meet the building's east wall. Fenestration is irregular. Running south to north, going by stories, there is: Basement - two 4-pane casements, two 2-pane casements; First Story - four 1/1 sashes; 12-pane casement (in projection); Second Story - 1/1 sash, 12-pane casement (in projection); Attic - 2/2 sash, 18-pane casement.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

7 DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Little or none of the interior material is original. In the basement, the original stone foundation remains exposed. The central chimney is supported by a thick brick pedestal.

A rough floor plan of the first floor shows the basic layout:



The house is currently owned by Mr. Raymond Seitz who inherited it in 1964. Conversation with Mr. Seitz revealed that he had never lived in the home and knew little of its history. He did know, however, that the house was already on the property when it was acquired by his parents in 1949.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly when this building was constructed. The most tangible clue is George Bromley's 1898 map of Towson which shows a frame house of comparable size and shape on the lot. An 1877 map by G. M. Hopkins shows the land vacant. It may thus be argued that the house may have been there in 1898 but certainly had not been built in 1877.

A less concrete clue in dating the home can be seen by examining the houses on either side of it. Numbers 203, 205 and 207 are very similar in style, very possibly built by the same person. Before 1888 these three lots were packaged together. After 1888 the lots were sold separately to different people. Thus, if the three homes were built by one person owning all three lots they would have to have been built before 1888.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1434

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES unknown BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 205 West Chesapeake Avenue is a good example of the colonial revival influence which was popular in the late Nineteenth to early Twentieth Centuries. The central pediment, the deeply corniced gables, and the columned porch are all classical elements used in creating the "colonial" style.

The house has distinctive individual features as well. The interior stairway housed in the projection is an uncommon and significant part of the design. An unusual and attractive decorative accent is the three dimensional sunburst pattern used to decorate the pediment.

The house is also significant as a document of a past way of life. This house is one of the few remaining indicators of a lifestyle which is now virtually non-existent in downtown Towson. When the house was built, much of central Towson was still residential with small businesses. Now, the number of turn of the century houses remaining is few, and the number still used as residences is even fewer. 205 West Chesapeake Ave. is indeed one of a "dying breed" in Towson.

As a document of late Nineteenth Century life, the house is also significant in its relation to the other houses on the block. Architecturally, the houses run the gamut of turn of the century styles -- Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Picturesque. It is one of the only unbroken blocks of late Nineteenth Century homes left in the area. Without the intrusion of modern buildings, the block documents Towson's original skyline. This block is some of the last remaining evidence of a past skyline which was scaled to human dimension, rather than to colossal size (as seen in the New Courts Building only just across the street.)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1898 Map of Towson by George Bromley
 1877 Map of Towson by G. M. Hopkins
 Conversation with present owner, Raymond A. Seitz
 Various land records (see complete title search on attached sheet)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Druscilla J. Null

WAYNE L. NIELD, II
 HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.

ORGANIZATION

Historic Towson/Coucher College

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Dulaney Valley Rd.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

It has been documented that Towson owes much of its character to the fact that it grew as a "19th century court house town." It was complete with a courthouse on a large green surrounded by banks, lawyers' offices, a jail and some rather fine and fashionable residences. There are some visual documents of this fact remaining, but modern development has fragmented the blocks around the square, leaving these links with the past often isolated from one another and dwarfed in scale.

The single row of houses on the south side of the 200 block of Chesapeake Avenue, however, do provide a continuous streetscape that is the last row of 19th century residences on that street inside of the loop road. Dramatically juxtaposed to the New Courts Building, they provide an opportunity to realize the more human scale that this rural town possessed until only recently. The same row of buildings also provides examples of various late 19th century architectural styles and although they are now used for offices, they demonstrate a good deal about residential activity in Towson.

No. 203 W. Chesapeake Avenue is a rambling multi-directional building that shows the influence of the Queen Anne style. Modern siding does not offer the various textures one might expect but the tower, bay windows, polygonal projections and various shaped windows do provide the variety of forms typical of that style. In Numbers 205, 207 and 209, however, we see what was once three nearly identical houses that are not as organic in appearance. On the contrary they are much more regular in form and expressive of the classical attitude suggested by the Colonial Revival. In these buildings one sees regular fenestration, pedimented porches with slender Doric columns and each is centralized by a prominent central pediment. A curious feature found in all three is the very nice sunburst or fan-shaped design that decorates the bottom corners of the central pediment. Nicely balancing this row of buildings is No. 211 which, like its neighbor at the opposite end of the block, is more Victorian in nature. Its use of shingled gables and clapboards, the "swell front" and high fieldstone foundation are suggestive of the picturesque.

TITLE SEARCH

OWNERS:

LIBER/FOLIO:

Present Owner. Raymond A. Seitz
Inherited property in 1964 from mother, May A. Seitz

(WR 88/332)

II. S. Clayton Seitz and wife, May A.
Bought property from Valentine Henry Edward Koerner (as
executor of Augusta Koerner) in deed dated May 31, 1949

(LR 1755/22)

III. Augusta Koerner
Deed of Reversion from the Safe Deposit and Trust Company
dated November 14, 1922

(LR 566/148)

IV. Augusta Koerner
Deed of Assignment from George Trent (as executor of
Valentine Bowmer) dated October 6, 1903

(LR 277/163)

V. Valentine Bowmer
Bought property from John Grason in deed dated May 14, 1897

(LR 225/46)

VI. John Grason
Bought property from Joseph Willis in deed dated September
28, 1888

(LR 170/554)

VII. Joseph Willis
Beased property from Milton Offutt in deed dated July
1, 1888

(LR 170/287)

VIII. Milton Offutt

W. Chesapeake Ave

205

BA-1434



TOWSON
SCALE 1"=200'

DEPT. OF ASSESSMENTS & TAXATION
TAL MAP DIVISION
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
MAP NO. 70A



BA-1434

CHRS.
205 W. ~~BROAD~~ AVE.
N.E. CORNER

W. Nicely
1/78